Rosmerta's Special Brew

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Rosmerta's Special Brew

by lumosatnight

Summary

Let me invite you, dear reader, into a story about love and longing, growing and growing up. About recognising what society wants and saying *To hell with that.* A story about finding your true self, no matter who or with whom that may be, and never letting doubt swallow you whole.

This is a story about how Madam Rosmerta, of the Three Broomsticks fame, became the unofficial Queer Crisis Counselor for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft, Wizardry, and Wixenry.

Or, 5 times she helped other baby gays + 1 time they helped her.

Notes

Written for Prompt #117, Madam Rosmerta as queer high femme bartender mentoring the baby gays who come through her pub (5+1 style). Dear thistlecat, I changed the prompt a little bit, but hopefully, it is still to your liking. I also did not make it nearly as dark or as angsty as you requested. But again, I hope you like the direction I took it. Please don't ask me how all these students have so much time to be lounging around at the Three Broomsticks. They just do 🙃.

Thank you vitaminpops for the read-through and for making sure I didn't accidentally stick my foot in my mouth anywhere. To everyone else, I hope you enjoy this little story. It's a bit self-indulgent and filled to the brim with some of my favorite ships. Cheers!

Sidenote: This is the first Madam Rosmerta/Andromeda Black Tonks tagged work on AO3 🤩

See the end of the work for more notes

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The Beginning

Madam Rosmerta had a reputation.

No, not *that* kind of reputation. Get your mind out of the gutter, dearie.

Madam Rosmerta had a reputation of being in possession of the most exquisitely tasting brew. She stashed it in the backroom of the Three Broomsticks away from students' grabbing hands. The recipe was rumoured to have been created by Merlin himself.

If you were lucky, or unlucky, enough to taste this brew, it was said your insides would flood with warmth, the weather would turn clear, all your acne would be washed away, and, most importantly, all your doubts and insecurities would be gone.

Poof. Just like that. A brand new you.

Now that wasn't exactly the truth, but it was close enough in a way.

With a reputation such as the one Madam Rosmerta sported, people could say whatever they wanted and only a tenth of it would be true. Such was the detriment of fame—Our own Harry Potter knew that all too well.

But let me invite you, dear reader, into a story about love and longing, growing and growing up. About recognising what society wants and saying *To hell with that.* A story about finding your true self, no matter who or with whom that may be, and never letting doubt swallow you whole.

This is a story about how Madam Rosmerta, of the Three Broomsticks fame, became the unofficial Queer Crisis Counselor for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft, Wizardry, and Wixenry.

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One: Andy

It all started in Rosa Rosmerta's sixth year.

Her good friend, Bellatrix Black, was having a rough year, recently betrothed to the insufferable and entirely too handsy Rodolphus Lestrange, goaded by her parents into keeping her younger sisters in line.

It was no wonder they ended up at the local pub during their sole Hogsmeade weekend, chugging pint after pint of butterbeer.

When Bella excused herself to use the loo and never returned, Rosa assumed she had been abandoned with the check again. Bella had an awfully bad habit of doing that. Rosa always wondered why the people with the most money were always the ones least willing to spend it.

Rolling her eyes, she dropped a few galleons on the table and gathered her coat to leave. A shadow fell across her table, blocking the window of falling snow from view.

"Um… hi."

"Andromeda, right? Bella's sister."

Andromeda made a face, button nose wrinkling cutely. "Just call me Andy."

"Right, Andy. What can I do for you?" Rosa had never talked to Bella's sister before. A casual wave in the halls, a brief nod in the library, that had been the extent of their interactions. Andy was a full three years below them, so that was to be expected. This, however, was new.

"I was wondering," said Andy, fidgeting with her sleeve, "if you could talk to Bella for me."

"Sure..." Rosa sat back down in the booth and patted the seat next to her. "What is it you need me to talk to her about?"

"Well, I…" Andy looked off to the side. She really did have lovely eyes, such a rich deep brown, so similar to Bella's yet so different. "I wanted to tell her that, umm well, I don't think I can be her sister anymore."

Rosa frowned. "Dear, whatever do you mean? Are your parents sending you away? Are they cutting you off—"

"No, no! Nothing as serious as that." Andy gave a strangled laugh. "No, I just… I don't feel very much like a girl, so I don't think I can be her sister anymore."

"Oh. Well then."

Rosa waved down the nearest waiter and ordered another round. They were going to need it. She waited for the drinks to arrive, tapping her wand against the rim when they did.

“I’m trying out a new recipe,” she said, pushing a glass towards Andy. “The owner gave me special permission.”

Andy cautiously took a sip and smiled, glancing at Rosa in surprise.

“I’m calling it my special brew.” Rosa winked, causing Andy to blush into her glass.

“So,” said Rosa when their glasses were half gone and Andy had a lovely foam moustache glistening above her top lip. “If not a girl, what *do* you feel like then? A boy maybe or somewhere in between?”

Andy shrugged, cheeks going a bit pink. “I don’t really know. It depends on the day, I guess. Like today, I feel like somewhere in between, I think.”

Rosa nodded, her face breaking into a wistful smile. “That sounds wonderful.”

“It does?” Andy raised a disbelieving eyebrow.

“Oh yes,” she replied easily. “Don’t you see what this means? Some days you get to be a girl. Some days you get to be a boy. Some days you get to be neither. You get to be whatever, whoever, you want. Isn’t that wonderful?”

“I… suppose.” Andy scowled down at the table. “But my parents will never approve. Cissy barely talks to me, and Bella will probably ignore me too. That’s why I wanted you to tell her first. She listens to you.”

“Sometimes.”

“Sometimes,” Andy conceded. They pulled their glass closer again, the long sleeves on their winter coat falling over their hands like mittens. Rosa thought it was the cutest thing she had ever seen.

“I just don't know what to do,” Andy said finally. “I don’t want them to be upset with me.”

“You want to know what I think?”

“What is that?”

Rosa slammed her hand down on the table, startling Andy in their seat.

“Fuck them,” she declared.

Andy giggled into a mittened hand. Proper ladies didn’t swear, especially proper ladies like Rosa Rosmerta, Hogwarts’s blonde beauty in the running for most lusted after student in history.

“I’m serious,” Rosa continued. “If they can’t appreciate the real you, then get rid of the whole lot of them.”

“I can—Can I really do that?”

“Of course, you can.” Rosa nodded decisively. “Of course, you should talk to your family first and see what they say. But if they cannot see reason, then get rid of them. You don’t need those

kinds of people around to be happy."

"But what about Bella?" Andy brought up a good point. *What about Bella?* "Aren't you—Isn't she your friend?"

Rosa thought for a moment. "She is," she said carefully, "but sometimes friends grow apart. It's not entirely unheard of to leave Hogwarts and make completely new friends." It was probably overdue too, with the way Bella was going around praising all that Dark Lord business recently. Merlin, she sounded like she was joining a cult half the time she rattled in Rosa's ear.

"I… suppose." Andy looked down at the table again.

"And remember." Rosa couldn't help herself when Andy looked so sad. *"The blood of the covenant is thicker —*"

"Blood is thicker than water. Yes, I know how the saying goes which means I should stand by my family no matter what, but what if they don't stand by *me?* What then?"

"Not quite," she said. "The full saying actually goes: *The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb.* Which actually means the bonds you choose are more important than the bonds made at birth."

"Oh," said Andy, sitting a bit straighter. "So that means…"

"Exactly." Rosa sipped the last of her drink and rose from the table.

Andy caught her wrist as she passed and looked up at her through their lashes. Such pretty eyes. "Um, thanks, Rosa. I—this really helped, I think."

"Anytime, dearie." Rosa winked.

The snow outside was crisp and cold. Rosa pulled her yellow scarf around her neck and trudged back towards the castle alone.

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Two: Remus

"Hooligans, the whole lot of them." Rosa set the tray of glasses down, brow pinched but smile fond. She had been running the Three Broomsticks for a few years now, and never in all that time had she come across such troublemakers as this so-called band of Marauders.

"Hullo, Madam Rosmerta. I'm terribly sorry about the ruckus. I'll try to get them to calm down when—"

Rosa detached the towel from the apron around her waist and smacked Remus Lupin lightly over the head. "As if you could control them. They'll make a mess no matter who tells them off."

"Right, sorry."

“Don’t apologise, dear. *They* should be the ones apologising.” She angled her head at one James Potter and one Sirius Black chasing a skittish Peter Pettigrew around the room. It looked as if they were trying to pin a long paper tail to his… well, Rosa didn’t need to think about that any more than she needed to.

“Sorry,” Remus said again.

“Now, what did I just say?”

“I’m s—I mean I didn’t mean to.”

“Have a drink, dear.” She pushed a glass into his hands.

“Um, thanks.” He brought the glass to his lips, gaze never wavering from his friends leaving chaos all around him.

“How do you like it?”

“Oh, it’s um… good.” Remus took another sip, and then another. “It’s, um, really good actually. What is it you put in here?”

“Just some holiday cheer.” Rosa winked at him, and Remus blushed.

He went back to watching his friends, eyes never leaving one figure in particular.

“Do you want him or do you want to be him?” Rosa said, placing herself on the unoccupied stool.

“Sorry?” Remus glanced over at her.

“Him. The one you keep staring at. Do you *want* him or do you want *to be* him?”

“Um… I…”

“It’s alright to want both. Just nice to know either way. Really puts things into perspective, you know.”

Remus looked over at the group. James and Sirius had successfully corned Peter and were tackling him to the ground. Sirius sprung up, hands waving in the air, a huge grin on his face. “Moony!” he yelled across the pub. “Did you see that? A new record. Only took us 2 minutes and 32 seconds to pin the tail on Wormy.”

Remus’s lips broke into an involuntary smile. “That’s great, Pads. I’m sure Peter appreciates how efficient you’re getting.”

“Yeah, efficient my arse,” Peter grumbled. “I wish they were *less* efficient, not *more.”*

The group clambered over, and Rosa hopped off the stool, her heels clacking against the floor. She was still young, but she wasn’t *that* young. She was well past the acceptable age to be fraternising with students.

As she passed Remus's spot, she gave him a quick flick with her towel. He almost dropped the glass he was holding.

"I think it's both," she said, voice low enough for the rest of the group not to hear.

Remus gave a slight nod, his eyes trained once again on Sirius's laughing features.

"And you know what?" She brought her lips closer to his ear. "I'm fairly sure he wants you too."

Remus really did drop his glass that time.

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Three: Charlie

"What will it be this time, dearie?" Rosa put a hand on her hip and balanced the tray with the other.

"Surprise me!" Charlie Weasley's voice boomed out across the pub, rich and strong. She always had thought he would be a good Quidditch announcer, but he had ended up as the Gryffindor Seeker instead. And, well, no one could deny he was a vision straddling that broom.

Charlie was alone this time, settling into his usual booth in the corner.

Nymphadora Tonks, his best friend and possible love interest, was nowhere in sight. For that Rosa was grateful. She dearly enjoyed Tonks's bubbly company, but they were a train wreck in human form. Every time Tonks entered Rosa's establishment, the tables screamed in pain and the glasses tried to hide themselves further in the cupboards. And for good reason too. Tonks had already cost Rosa twelve glasses this year alone.

Andy had never been that clumsy, Rosa thought wistfully. Tonks must have gotten it from Ted's side of the family.

"Here we are." Rosa levitated the glass over to Charlie's table. "What's the occasion then? What are we celebrating?"

"Not celebrating, just thinking." Charlie's dark red brows were pulled together in thought.

"Well, I say that's a cause for celebration." She tapped her wand against his glass.

"What did you do?"

"Just added a secret ingredient. I think you'll like it better now." She winked. Charlie merely smiled back, unfazed.

He took the first sip. "Mmm. You're right, this is better." He closed his eyes and tilted his head back, the freckles on his throat standing out against tanned skin.

"So what's on your mind?" Rosa leaned across the table, resting her chin in her hands.

"Work, NEWTs, my mum. Nothing new."

“You’re still planning on working at the Dragon Reserve in Romania after you graduate, right?”

“That’s the plan,” Charlie said, eyes still closed.

“And you’re a smart boy. I’m sure your NEWTs will go swimmingly.”

“Probably,” he said with a shrug.

“Ahh.” Rosa tapped a painted nail against her chin. “So it’s your mother then. What’s she done now? Send you the wrong colour jumper for Christmas?”

The corner of Charlie’s mouth pulled up into a reluctant smile.

“Really now. What could be troubling you? If Molly hurt you in some way, she’ll have me to answer to.”

Charlie finally opened his eyes, his gaze a troubled blue. “Nothing like that. She just—well, she’s been trying to set me up on dates recently. Wants me to get hitched as soon as I leave Hogwarts since that’s what she and dad did. Except that’s not what *I* want.”

“I see,” said Rosa. “And you and Tonks would never—”

Charlie shook his head. “No, Tonks and I aren’t like that.”

“Mmhm.” Rosa ran one of her sharp nails against the grain of the table. “And have you tried telling her you don’t want that?”

“I’ve tried.” Charlie sighed. “But it never seems to get through. She gets a little weird about families. I think since she lost her brothers. She can’t understand that it’s not something *I* want, even if she would sell her left kidney to see her first grandchild.”

“Have you tried writing to her? Everything that you’ve just said, write it all down and send it to her in the post. From what I remember, Molly is one of those people who react-first-think-later. Maybe if you give her time to think before she responds, you may get a different answer.”

“I could try that,” said Charlie. He swirled his glass, the bubbles glinting from the overhead light.

Rosa propped herself up, her back cracking. Merlin, she was nearly forty now. It was amazing and unsettling how quickly time flew. She could remember the days when she had been Charlie’s age, unsure of her future, unsure of who she was.

“Well, whatever you try, let me know. I need to know if I’ll be required to knock on the Burrow’s front door.”

“Thanks, Rosie.” Charlie raised his glass in a toast and downed the rest.

“Tut, tut. You know that’s not my name.” Rosa swiped his glass as soon as he finished, levitating a fresh one from behind the bar.

“I know”—Charlie flashed a toothy grin—“I just like to tease you.”

“Children these day!” Rosa gasped. “So impolite. Never respecting their elders!” She ruffled Charlie’s hair, causing him to grimace.

“But really,” Charlie said seriously, pulling away. “Thank you for listening to me.”

Rosa tipped her head. “You know where to find me if you ever need to again. I’ll always be here for you, dear.”

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Four: Oliver

“And *then,* can you believe what he did?”

“No, whatever did he do?” Rosa paused in wiping a glass down behind the bar, giving Oliver Wood her full attention even though she had heard an iteration of this very story at least five times now. Three of which had come from the Weasley twins, so maybe those hadn’t counted because she could never tell what was real and what was embellished beyond reason with those two.

“He fucking spat on my face in the middle of—”

“Language, dear.”

“Sorry. He freaking spat on my face in the middle of *our* Quidditch practice with *both* of our teams watching! It’s like he’s *trying* to infuriate me! Everywhere I go, he’s in my way, smirking at me. I can’t even walk down the hall without having to manoeuvre around his big bulky shoulders.”

“Hmm,” said Rosa, returning to wiping down the glasses.

“He’s like a massive brick wall that keeps following me around just to annoy me.” Oliver paused his ranting, chest heaving, face flushed.

Rosa set a glass down in front of him which Oliver immediately picked up and drained in one go.

“Oh, that’s good.” Oliver wiped his mouth on the back of his sleeve. “What’d you put in that?”

“Calming draught, to help you sleep better since you’re so riled up.” She winked.

“Wait.” Oliver set the glass down. “Really? I didn’t think students were allowed those outside of exam season. If the headmaster finds out that I’ve been taking potions on the side—”

“Relax, dear. It was a joke, and not a very good one I’m afraid. There’s nothing in your drink besides plain old butterbeer.”

“Oh. Oh, okay.” Oliver let out a sigh of relief. “That’s good then. Wow, you really had me worried for a minute.”

“Yes, I’m sorry about that.” She slid another glass across the bartop. “Here. This one’s on the house. As an apology.”

“No, it’s alright. It was a joke. Funny. Haha. Sorry, I’m just a bit tense right now.”

“No need to apologise. I was the one out of line.” She set down her towel and leaned closer across the bar. Normally she would be worried about showing too much cleavage in this position, but the bar was nearly empty and Oliver wasn’t interested in that part of her anatomy. In fact, he wasn’t interested in her at all, really. “So tell me more about these boy troubles you’re having.”

“Oh, well, I don’t know if I’d call them *boy troubles* —”

“They’re boys, and they’re troubling you. Sounds like boy troubles to me.”

“Boys? As in boys, *plural?”* said Oliver.

“Your roommate, right? The third Mr Weasley. You still haven’t told him how you feel.”

Oliver blushed, cheeks staining a deep red. “No, I—I haven’t had the chance. He’s been so busy with prefect duties, I hardly get to see him anymore.”

“Mmhm. Perfectly reasonable,” Rosa agreed.

“And then with the Chamber of Secrets opening, the whole school’s been in chaos. And I just didn’t want to tell him in the middle of all that. You know what I mean?”

“Right, of course.”

“And then fucking Flint keeps bloody stalking me—”

“Language.”

“Right, sorry. But with Flint always around, I haven’t had a lot of time to even look for Percy and possibly tell him how I feel.” He paused, out of breath again, and slumped down onto the stool. His face fell onto his hands which were cradled in front of him.

Rosa gave him a comforting pat on the head. “There, there,” she said. “It will all be alright soon.”

Oliver tilted his head, looking up at her with one bleary eye. “What do you think I should do?”

“Well.” She paused. “I think you should tell Percy how you feel before someone else comes along and snatches him up.”

“But I don’t even know if he’s gay.”

“Have you asked him?”

“Well, no,” Oliver admitted, looking away.

“Then ask him and see what he says.”

“Yeah… I could do that.” He sounded like he would most definitely *not* do that.

“As for the other one. Flint, was it? It almost seems like you fancy him too.”

“WHAT?” Oliver yelled. He shot up from the bartop, alarming the few other patrons milling about. “I do not *fancy* Flint.”

Rosa pursed her lips to keep from smiling at Oliver’s dramatics. “You certainly do talk about him a lot.”

“Because he’s *annoying.”* Oliver scowled and kicked at the stool leg.

“Fine then. Let me ask you this.” Rosa leaned even closer, making sure to catch Oliver’s eye. “Would you rather *fight* Flint or *fuck* Flint?”

Oliver’s cheeks went Gryffindor red again.

“Because there’s an awfully fine line between love, lust, and hate. And sometimes, it can even be all three.”

“No, no, no.” Oliver vigorously shook his head side to side. “I *can’t* like Flint. I *like* Percy.”

Rosa shrugged and summoned the mop from the backroom. “You can like more than one person at a time. That’s allowed, you know. Some people even date more than one partner at once. As long as all parties are on the same page about it, I don’t see why you can’t.”

“Wait, so I should date both Flint *and* Percy?”

“If that’s what you want, and you all agree.”

She started moving the mop in coordinated strokes. Back and forth. Back and forth. She had nearly finished mopping the entire pub by the time Oliver’s head snapped up, broken out of whatever reverie he’d just been in.

“I gotta go!” he called, slamming a handful of galleons on the bartop. Even from this distance, she knew it was way over the amount of what he had drunk. “Thanks for the drinks! I’ll come back to visit soon if I can. But who knows, I might be a bit busy coming up. Quidditch season is starting again and the Chamber—”

“Yes, yes. It’s alright. Come and see me whenever you can. You don’t have to worry. I’m not pressed for company or anything.” She summoned the galleons and sneakily dropped them back into Oliver’s coat pocket.

“Right, of course,” replied Oliver, but it sounded like he was only half-listening.

He was halfway out the door when Rosa stopped him one last time. “Where are you going, by the way, rushing off in such a hurry all of the sudden?”

Oliver smiled, his white teeth flashing. “I have a couple of confessions to make.” And with that, he was gone, whirling out into the night in a burst of energy.

“Ahh, young love.” Rosa sighed.

She went back to mopping the rest of the floor.

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Five: Pansy

“Are you feeling alright, dearie? You’re looking a bit peaky.”

“Fine,” said Pansy Parkinson, “just fine.”

“Also, you know your friend just walked into the wrong loo?”

“Who, Daphne?”

“No, the young Mr Malfoy.”

“Oh, he’s probably just…” Pansy waved a dismissive hand. “I don’t know. He’s been distracted lately. Probably just read the sign wrong.”

“Alright then. Can I get you anything? Are you waiting for anyone?”

At Rosa’s question, Pansy’s entire body tensed, shoulders stiffening, back going ramrod straight. “Yes, I’m—I’m waiting for a friend.”

“I can get something started for you. Have it ready for when your friend gets here.” Rosa smiled encouragingly.

“No, that’s alright. I think I’ll wait for her— *him* to arrive.”

“Whatever you want, dear.” She went back to minding the bar.

Glancing out the window, she saw Harry Potter and his gaggle of friends meander by. Now *there* was an unfortunate soul. Destined for fame at such a young age, always under the public eye. She remembered last year and watching his unfortunate date with that lovely Chinese girl. Cho had come crying to her afterwards, and she had given her some of her special brew.

Across the pub, Pansy didn’t look much better, biting at her lipstick-stained lips, shoulders slumping as she stared out the window. Rosa approached the girl again and floated a glass onto the table. Pansy immediately straightened as she came closer.

“For the nerves,” she said, pushing the glass towards Pansy. “It looks like you could use a bit of liquid courage.”

“Isn’t that what Liquid Luck is for?” Pansy sneered, but took the glass nonetheless. Rosa had dealt with the prickly sort before. Behind that hard exterior was usually a scared child waiting to be loved.

“Well, I promise you. There’s no Felix in there. Not unless you ask nicely.” Rosa winked, and Pansy blushed, raising the glass higher. Good to know that even approaching fifty, Rosa still had it.

She took out her towel and pretended to wipe down a nearby table. With these sorts, sometimes it was better to not approach head-on. “Who are you waiting for then? You seem awfully out of sorts to be waiting for just a friend?”

Pansy glanced at her, but Rosa pretended to be fascinated with a stain on the tabletop.

"We are… friends… sort of." Pansy looked back out the window. "Or at least we were before…. I'm just not sure what we are now after…"

"After what dear?"

Pansy bit her lip. "Well, after she— *he* — *they* —Oh bollocks! I always mess it up."

"After they…?" Rosa moved closer, wiping down the chair directly beside Pansy now. She didn't normally wipe down the chairs, but Pansy didn't need to know that.

Pansy took a large sip from her pint, not even a smidgeon of red lipstick sticking to the rim. Rosa was impressed by her makeup charms. She, herself, had taken years to get them right.

Pansy set the glass down and took a deep breath. "Daphne came back for fall term saying she wanted to be called Dylan. She moved out of the girls dormitory and started wearing the boy's uniform. Then she— *he* cut his hair, and I hardly recognise her— *him* anymore."

"You're afraid," said Rosa, and Pansy scowled. "You're afraid Dylan's changed too much to be your friend anymore."

"Well, no. It's just that before summer hols, we…" Pansy wiped a single tear that had trickled down her cheek which Rosa pretended not to notice. "I confessed to Daph—Dylan at the end of last term, and he hasn't talked to me since. I thought he was ignoring me until he said he wanted to meet in Hogsmeade this weekend."

"It sounds like to me you're both confused on where the other stands."

"I'm not standing; I'm sitting," said Pansy, crossing her legs on the chair as if to emphasise her point.

Merlin, the sass in this one. It was a good thing Rosa had been doing this for years and had the patience to rival the holiest of saints.

"Does being called Dylan change how you feel about your friend?" Rosa said patiently.

Pansy frowned. "Well, no. Not really. A name is just a name."

"Hmm," said Rosa. "And does cutting his hair and swapping his uniform change anything?"

"That's a stupid question," said Pansy. "It's just hair, just clothing. Da—Dylan is still there underneath."

"Good," said Rosa. She had been rubbing the same spot for ten minutes and her arm was starting to ache. "Then tell him that. I think that will help your relationship quite a lot."

Pansy pursed her lips. "But doesn't he already know?"

Rosa shrugged, straightened up, and rolled her left shoulder. "Maybe, maybe not. Never a bad idea to confirm though, just to be sure he knows."

“Yes, alright.” Pansy turned back to the window, perfectly plucked brows furrowed deep in thought.

A figure appeared trudging down the street, a short boy with rosy cheeks and honey gold locks cropped into the popular style of the week. Upon catching sight of him, Pansy stiffened in her seat.

Rosa gave her a quick pat on the hand. “I’ll leave you to it then. Good luck,” she said, but Pansy wasn’t listening, too fixated on the door to the pub swinging open and the boy ambling inside.

Pansy waved him over, practically jumping out of her seat in her eagerness. Rosa saw Dylan’s lips pull up into a nervous smile.

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Plus One: Rosa

“Happy Birthday, Miss Rosa!” Teddy Lupin jumped up and down, his head of turquoise hair flopping over his eyes. At twelve years old, he was just as eager and excited as he had been at four.

“Thank you, dear. The cake is lovely.” Rosa blew out the candles—all sixty of them. Merlin, was she really sixty already? Age was just a number or something like that.

“Alright, Teddy, time for you to go back to the castle.” Harry Potter wrapped a firm arm around Teddy’s shoulders and steered him toward the door.

“But, why???” Teddy whinged.

“Because I told the headmistress I’d have you back by nine, and—Wow! Would you look at the time? It’s eight forty-five.”

“Alright, fine.” Teddy stuck out his bottom lip. “But you’re coming back next weekend, right?”

“Of course,” said Harry, smiling. “I wouldn’t miss your first Quidditch game.”

“Okay, good,” Teddy said, appeased for the time being. He pushed Harry out of the way and walked the rest of the way to the door, his heavy boots stomping and leaving dirt all over Rosa’s recently cleaned floor. “Happy Birthday!” he shouted before sprinting into the night.

“Teddy, wait! You have to—Dammit.” Harry threw Rosa an apologetic glance. “I have to go after that one. Make sure he doesn’t get into any more trouble.”

Rosa waved away his concerns. “Go, go,” she said. “I’ll still be here when you get back.”

An odd look passed over Harry’s face, secretive and just a bit smug. “See you later, then.”

“How do you do it?” Rosa leaned back in her chair as soon as the door closed, sipping from her pint. “That one is a whole handful and a half.”

Beside her, Draco Malfoy grinned. “He is,” he agreed. “But he’s worth all the trouble and more.”

“I’m glad you think so because I could *never.”* She tipped the glass back, letting the last drops fall into her mouth.

The pub was empty now, all of tonight’s guests trickling out over the past few hours. Some of them had been truly bizarre.

Aberforth had stopped by with a bottle of mead which Horace spent his whole visit eyeing with ill-contained greed. Even the minister had been by at some point, sweeping in in a flurry of dark blue robes and kissing her hand. But that was alright; Kingsley and her went way back, all the way back to their school days.

Former students, current students, some centaurs from the forbidden forest, Hagrid’s half-brother who Rosa had made wait outside.

About halfway through the evening Charlie had floated an entire bathtub into the pub—a bathtub in which a real live mermaid from the Great Lake was lounging. Oliver and Marcus had been immediately enamoured while Percy had scowled off to the side. Pansy had arrived late and left early, something about catching a Port-Key to meet Dylan in Milan. Even Minerva, herself, had made an appearance, gifting Rosa a set of magically charmed ice cubes that never thawed, before disappearing back up to the castle and her headmistress duties.

It had been a lovely party and an entirely unnecessary affair.

“Here, let me get the next one for you.” Draco reached for her empty glass which Rosa allowed. After the terrible events of Draco’s sixth year, he had come to apologise and beg forgiveness. But there was nothing to be forgiven, not in Rosa’s eyes. He had been a child, scared and put under enormous pressure. She trusted that he would never do something like that again.

“Your special brew,” Draco said, setting down the new glass in front of Rosa. He winked.

Rosa laughed. “Quite right, dear. My special brew.” She took a sip and smacked her lips. “Delicious as always.”

Draco shifted in her seat, lips curling up in a secretive smirk. “Actually, we have one more birthday present for you.”

“Oh?” Rosa set her glass down. “I thought organising the party was my present. Or that darling lopsided cake Teddy made.”

“Not all of it.” Draco grinned.

The door chimed, and Rosa turned in her seat to tell the intruder that the bar was closed.

Andy Black Tonks entered the Three Broomsticks, long dark cloak draped over tall shoulders, tight corset cinched at the waist.

“Andy.” Draco stood from the bar and gave the newcomer a kiss on the cheek. “How are you feeling today?”

“Lovely to see you, darling.” Andy pulled back, long curls framing a narrow face. “I’m feeling like a *her* today.”

“Excellent,” said Draco. He grabbed his hat from the end of the bar and tipped it in Rosa’s direction. “Well, I’ll be off. Can’t leave my husband alone for too long. Salazar only knows the kind of mischief he and Teddy can get up to together.”

He winked at the both of them and swung the door closed, locking it with a flick of his wand.

“This is a setup, isn’t it?” Rosa sipped from her glass.

“I’m afraid so.” Andy took the seat next to her, rearranging the long pleats of her skirt just so.

“Yes, but by who? I don’t believe Harry had anything to do with this.”

Andy merely smiled. She reached over the couple inches and took Rosa’s hand. “It’s good to see, Rosa.”

“Yes, it is. Isn’t it?”

“I should have stopped by sooner. I’ve just been…. It’s just been so hard these past few years.”

Rosa clutched Andy’s hand. “No no, dear. You were doing the best you could. I’ve never expected anything from it.”

Andy gave her a wobbly smile. “The flowers were lovely. We used them at the funeral.” Which funeral, Andy didn’t say. There were almost too many of them to keep track of: Bella, Tonks, Remus, Ted.

Rosa stroked the back of her hand, both of them lost to old memories, pink hair and wicked smiles, scarred cheekbones and helping hands.

“I would very much like”—Andy looked up at her, her brown eyes sparkling—“for us to be friends again.” Such pretty eyes. Andy had always had such lovely eyes. “I need someone to talk to who isn’t my sister or at least twenty years younger than me. I’m too old to keep up with the young ones these days.”

Rosa bumped her shoulder. “You’re not *that* old,” she teased. “Besides, I’m older. Remember I just turned sixty? So that means when you’re with me, you’re young.”

Andy giggled into her hand. She looked so much like the young student, almost fifty years ago, cornering Rosa at the pub with her questions and her doubt.

“Yes,” said Rosa. She stroked Andy’s cheek with the back of her hand, watching a beautiful blush bloom. “I think I’d quite like that, being friends. There’s also a spare room upstairs if you ever feel the need to get away. I know how lonely an empty house can be.”

“That would be perfect,” Andy said. She smiled.

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The End

Now, dear reader, we have come to the end of our story.

Shocking! I know. *Inconceivable!* Certainly, to be sure. *But there must be so much more to tell!* Indeed there is, but it is not my story to tell, and for that I ask your understanding. Not every story is meant for all. Each person, each story will come forth in their own time. Some we may never know.

But what of Rosa Rosmerta's special brew? What was the secret ingredient?

Ah, now that I do not know. Only one person truly knows the answer to those seemingly important questions. We can theorise, of course, that it was love itself that gave those young students the confidence to be themselves, to love who they wanted to love. Perhaps it was a drop of honey, floated over the rim, making their butterbeer that extra bit of sweet. Or maybe, it was a tap on the glass, an extra cooling charm, keeping those bubbly drinks crisp and cool.

Whatever it was, whoever it was, it worked, for that is a miracle in and of itself. Let us be grateful, then, to share in these small bits of happiness, glimpses of life, found through the doorway of the Three Broomsticks.

Thank you, darling, for coming on this journey with me. I shall never forget you and neither shall dear Rosa. She never forgets a lost soul who passes through her doors.

Until next time.

With love,

Andy

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End Notes

And then they lived happily ever after in a long-term QPR, living above the Three Broomsticks, Teddy coming down to visit them every other weekend. Thank you for reading! I am always open to comments and constructive criticism. If you feel something in the story could be changed/improved upon, please do not hesitate to let me know. Happy Pride Month 🌈

Works inspired by this one

[Restricted Work] by Cailynwrites, ETL_Echo_Audiobooks

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